

**TO:** Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators

**SUBMITTED BY:** New Program Review Team—  
Spark Teacher Education Institute

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

That the Vermont Standards Board vote to accept the findings of the Program Approval Team and grant approval in accordance with the Team's recommendations.

**MOTION:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, move that the VSBPE grant the Spark Teacher Education Institute one-year conditional approval to the following new alternate route programs:

Middle Grades – Science, 5-9

Middle Grades – Social Studies, 5-9

Middle Grades- Language Arts, 5-9

Middle Grades – Mathematics, 5-9

Mathematics, 7-12

Social Studies, 7-12

Science, 7-12

English Language Arts, 7-12

I further move that the VSBPE grant the Spark Teacher Education Institute two-year conditional approval to the elementary education, K-6, alternate route program.

Approval for these programs is contingent upon a favorable review of both a One-Year Report and a Two-Year Report offering a description of the institution's progress on each of the program approval standards not found to meet standard at the time of the program review, progress addressing stipulations and areas indicated as "concerns" in the Team's report, as well as compliance with state standards and any conditions specified by the Vermont Standards Board.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) authorized a Review Team to conduct an on-site review of the alternate route teacher preparation program Spark Teacher Education Institute. The on-site visit occurred on March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 2009. Members of the Review Team included: **Heather McCollum**, Chair of the Higher Education Committee of the VSBPE, Professor at Union Institute and University, member of the ROPA Design Team; **Patti Cook**, faculty at New England Culinary Institute and Vermont Mentor Program; **Mike Caraco**, mathematics teacher and chair of the Mathematics Department at Burr and Burton High School; and, **Julie Longchamp**, middle grades teacher at Williston Central School, member of the ROPA Design Team, and member of the Peer Review Advisory Committee. Mary Beth McNulty from the Vermont Department of Education assisted the Team.

**ROPA TEAM REPRESENTATIVE:** Heather McCollum

<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Approval Recommended</b>
Elementary, K-6	2 yr. Conditional
Middle Grades – Science, 5-9	1 yr. Conditional
Middle Grades – Social Studies, 5-9	1 yr. Conditional
Middle Grades- Language Arts, 5-9	1 yr. Conditional
Middle Grades – Mathematics, 5-9	1 yr. Conditional
Mathematics, 7-12	1 yr. Conditional
Social Studies, 7-12	1 yr. Conditional
Science, 7-12	1 yr. Conditional
English Language Arts, 7-12	1 yr. Conditional

**Stipulations in Middle and Secondary Areas:**

1. Document in a one-year report, how the program assures that candidates develop in-depth content and pedagogical knowledge in the endorsement area(s) sought, including the central concepts, the tools of inquiry, and the structures of the relevant discipline(s).

**Stipulations in All Areas:**

2. Document in a one-year report, that field experiences assure that all candidates (including interns working as paraeducators) gradually take on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher during the 12 consecutive weeks, five days a week.
3. Document in a one-year report, that all candidates are assured knowledge of child development, special education, and technology and its application in teaching and learning.

**Report of the ROPA Program Review Team  
Spark Teacher Education Institute, Alternate Route  
Brattleboro, Vermont  
April 27, 2009**

The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) authorized a Review Team to conduct an on-site review of the alternate route teacher preparation program Spark Teacher Education Institute. The on-site visit occurred on March 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> 2009. Members of the Review Team included: **Heather McCollum**, Chair of the Higher Education Committee of the VSBPE, Professor at Union Institute and University, member of the ROPA Design Team; **Patti Cook**, faculty at New England Culinary Institute and Vermont Mentor Program; **Mike Caraco**, mathematics teacher and chair of the Mathematics Department at Burr and Burton High School; and, **Julie Longchamp**, middle grades teacher at Williston Central School, member of the ROPA Design Team, and member of the Peer Review Advisory Committee. Mary Beth McNulty from the Vermont Department of Education assisted the Team.

The ROPA Review Team deeply appreciated Spark's generous hospitality extended to the team members during the visit. The Team especially appreciated the program's warmth, forthrightness, and passion. The evidence room was well-organized and conducive to the Team's work, and the visit schedule formulated by the program allowed the Team multiple opportunities to gather the information necessary to complete a comprehensive review.

The Team acknowledges that Spark has operated a previous version of the program, WEL, in New Hampshire and that a number of policies and/or practices are in the process of being revised for the coming year.

The Team carefully reviewed Spark's Institutional Portfolio and reviewed electronic and hard copies of documents supplied by the Spark program administrators in the evidence room. The Team gathered additional information from in-person and phone interviews with program faculty, Praxis Board members, former WEL students, and administrators. After analyzing these findings, the Team makes the following recommendations to the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators:

**ROPA Program Approval Standards Summary**

(Options: Meets Standards=MS, Approaching Standard=AS, Emergent=E, No Evidence=NE)

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Rating</b>
I	Opportunities for Standards-based Preparation	AS
II	Collaboration with Pre-K-12 Schools	AS
III	System of Assessment	AS
IV	Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions	N/A
V	Commitment to Diversity	MS
VI	Resources	AS
VII	Institutional and Program Renewal	MS

<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Approval Recommended</b>
Elementary, K-6	2 yr. Conditional
Middle Grades – Science, 5-9	1 yr. Conditional
Middle Grades – Social Studies, 5-9	1 yr. Conditional
Middle Grades- Language Arts, 5-9	1 yr. Conditional
Middle Grades – Mathematics, 5-9	1 yr. Conditional
Mathematics, 7-12	1 yr. Conditional
Social Studies, 7-12	1 yr. Conditional
Science, 7-12	1 yr. Conditional
English Language Arts, 7-12	1 yr. Conditional

**Stipulations in Middle and Secondary Areas:**

1. Document in a one-year report, how the program assures that candidates develop in-depth content and pedagogical knowledge in the endorsement area(s) sought, including the central concepts, the tools of inquiry, and the structures of the relevant discipline(s).

**Stipulations in All Areas:**

2. Document in a one-year report, that field experiences assure that all candidates (including interns working as paraeducators) gradually take on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher during the 12 consecutive weeks, five days a week.
3. Document in a one-year report, that all candidates are assured knowledge of child development, special education, and technology and its application in teaching and learning.

## REPORT OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW TEAM

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### **Program Overview**

The Spark Teacher Education Institute offers adult learners a 13-month residency-based program. This field-based delivery model, with its focus on social justice and multicultural education, enables candidates to meet licensure requirements within a one-year time frame.

Each intern cohort includes candidates seeking a variety of endorsements. The program begins in May with a one-day orientation. In May and June candidates visit participating schools and are matched with mentor teachers for the coming school year. Additionally, they are assigned readings and written reflections to complete independently over the summer. In mid-August, candidates attend a week-long orientation in preparation for their internship in a public school classroom. Candidates spend four days a week for the entire academic year, August to June, working with a mentor teacher. Their fifth day is spent in seminars where “modules” are offered on a series of “program strands.”

### **STANDARD I: Standards-Based Preparation**

Programs provide candidates with coherent and purposeful instructional experiences. Programs assure that candidates acquire content-rich general knowledge and the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and pedagogy of their content area(s) as reflected in *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements. **Overall Rating: Approaching Standard**

#### **INDICATORS:**

##### *General Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions*

**1.01** Programs assure that candidates acquire content-rich general knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences, receive rich content across the disciplines, and complete a liberal arts major that will complement knowledge in their endorsement area(s). ***Meets Standard***

- Applicants to the program must hold a bachelor's degree in a field appropriate in their intended endorsement area.
- Candidates take the Praxis I examination as a condition for admission.

##### *Endorsement Area Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions*

**1.02** Programs assure that candidates develop in-depth content and pedagogical knowledge in the endorsement area(s) sought, including the central concepts, the tools of inquiry, and the structures of the relevant discipline(s). ***Approaching Standard***

- Prior to being recommended for licensure, candidates must take the Praxis II content knowledge examination. The Team notes that candidates who take the exam earlier in the program will have more time to develop an individual plan in areas that might be weak. This might include having candidates take coursework.
- While a transcript analysis is carried out at the time of admission, this process has not yet been formalized.
- Candidates complete a content knowledge portfolio to document their endorsement area knowledge. The Program Directors indicate that these portfolios will be assessed by a faculty member with expertise in the content area. Prior to being recommended for licensure, any "minor gaps" in the candidate's content knowledge must be filled through examination, additional coursework, and/or additional portfolio documentation.
- Candidates gain practical wisdom through the day-to-day teaching experiences of the year-long residency.
- Faculty members do not consistently demonstrate strength in their content pedagogy. Building a pool of faculty advisors with content expertise will be critical as the program grows.
- Coursework or modules related to content specific pedagogy do not appear sufficiently developed.
- Candidates do not clearly study reading and writing across the content areas.

1.03 Programs assure that candidates learn how preK-12 children develop, how they differ in their approaches to learning, and how to create equitable learning experiences that are responsive to all students' intellectual, social, physical and emotional development.

**Approaching Standard**

- Candidates study child development as part of the curriculum through seminar-based learning. Within this curriculum component, candidates are introduced to methods for creating equitable learning experiences that are responsive to all students' intellectual, social, physical and emotional development. The curriculum also includes special education law, a positive social environment, and classroom management.
- In the field, candidates are expected to include differentiated instruction in their lesson plans. Mentors and field advisors pay special attention to this in their work with candidates.
- While the program identifies "theories of human development and exceptionality" as a program module, adolescent development was not clearly addressed in the sample descriptions of seminar topics provided to the Team.

1.04 – Programs assure that candidates develop and demonstrate technological literacy and the ability to use technology within their endorsement area(s).

**Emergent**

- Candidates are expected to demonstrate their facility with technology in their internships and to document the appropriate technology in the classroom in their performance portfolio.
- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that the subject-specific seminars are meant to acquaint candidates with instructional technology in the endorsement area. This expectation, however, was not clearly articulated by program faculty in interviews.
- There is not a clear vision for candidates' use of technology. Candidates do not, for instance, appear to be addressing the implications for technology as part of their social justice work.
- There is not a clear system to ensure that all candidates receive technological literacy.
- While all of partner schools provide access to current technology, some mentor teachers may not use the technologies with their students requiring candidates to "negotiate" opportunities with the mentor teacher and/or the media specialist at the school in order to practice and demonstrate this competency.

1.05 Programs assure that candidates learn how to plan curriculum, instruction and assessment activities and structure positive learning environments aligned with the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

**Approaching Standard**

- Candidates study curriculum & assessment in their seminars. Seminar topics include principles of experiential learning, integrated curriculum, differentiated teaching and constructivist design. There were no syllabi available, however, for the Team to confirm this material.

- Candidates are expected to gain “fluency” with the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the relevant endorsement requirements as part of their lesson planning.
- Candidates are provided with lesson planning criteria. The handout presented to the Team, however, did not clearly incorporate state or local standards or *Grade Expectations*.
- Candidates’ performance portfolios will document their ability to plan for meaningful learning, to assess student learning, and to use assessment results to structure positive learning opportunities.
- It was not clear how candidates were using assessments of student work to inform their practice.
- The Team noted that the extensive reading list for the program did not include common teacher preparation readings such as *Understanding by Design* by Grant P. Wiggins or Richard Stiggins’ work on assessment.

1.06 Programs assure that candidates develop as reflective practitioners and plan for professional growth.	<b>Approaching Standard</b>
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- Candidates develop an Individual Learning Plan, which forms the basis for their work with their mentor and advisors over the course of the year.
- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that candidates are required to write reflective papers throughout the year. Additionally, assigned readings typically require candidates to reflect in writing on their own practice
- Candidates reflect on lesson plans and their implications for next steps and future practice. Candidates are also expected to complete written reflections on their observations in classrooms throughout the year and on a recorded lesson to share in seminar.
- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that observations by mentor teachers and field advisors of candidates’ teaching practice are followed by conferences with candidates. In these individual discussions candidates review data gathered by the observer, analyze the evidence, and draw conclusions. This process is intended to allow the candidate to develop an ability to self-reflect and self-correct.
- Candidates are not clearly assessed on their reflections by program faculty.

1.07 Programs assure that candidates understand and maintain standards of professional conduct guided by legal and ethical principles.	<b>Approaching Standard</b>
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- Candidates complete seminars that include attention to legal and ethical principles and expectations of professional conduct. This topic is first addressed in August prior to candidates beginning their internship. Syllabi were not available for review.
- The candidate handbook does reference professional conduct or regulations.

**Commendations:**

1. Candidates gain much needed hands-on learning through the program’s experiential-based learning in the year-long residency.
2. The cohort model promotes a strong community of learners where candidates can learn collaboratively.



**Concerns:**

1. The scope and sequence (e.g. syllabi, expectations, assessments, etc) of the seminars and modules are not clearly articulated.
2. Candidates are not assured of developing sufficient content knowledge and pedagogy under the guidance of the current faculty.
3. Technology has not been fully integrated into the program and candidates are not assured of developing the technological skills necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.
4. There is no clear system for the development, documentation, and communication of modules related to child development, special education, technology, use of standards in lesson/unit planning, student assessment, reading and writing in the content area.

**Considerations for Further Program Development:**

- Coursework and modules could be improved by including topics, readings, assignments with assessments, as well as hands-on experiences related specifically to content areas.

## **STANDARD II: Collaboration with Pre-K-12 Schools**

The program and its PreK-12 partners are committed to the improvement of teaching and learning for all candidates, cooperating practitioners, PreK-12 students, and college faculty. The program and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences to ensure that these are high-quality experiences capable of providing a candidate the opportunity to develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions as reflected in the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

**Overall Ranking: Approaching Standard**

### **INDICATORS:**

2.01 Programs establish respectful, collaborative, and mutually beneficial relationships with schools, districts and other educational settings that provide field experiences for candidates.

**Meets Standard**

- A number of partner schools have been identified in and around southeastern Vermont. Administrators and teachers at these schools are enthusiastic about the Spark program's full year commitment, as well as the program's focus on social justice and multicultural education.
- Program directors and faculty are available to schools to conduct workshops, to help form study groups on site, and to provide in-service opportunities for teachers in partner schools.
- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that Spark has established additional connections with schools in Washington, DC, New York City and Springfield, MA, where candidates experience day-long and overnight field trips.

2.02 The programs and their school partners work collaboratively using a systematic process to design, implement, and evaluate field experiences to ensure high-quality learning opportunities for candidates.

**Approaching Standard**

- The full-year internship necessitates that the program "be responsive to each intern-mentor pair." The Institutional Portfolio notes that collaboration among the mentor teacher, candidate and advisors is built into the internship timeline.
- Both mentor teachers and candidates are surveyed each year.
- Field advisors selected from the school sites present a potential design problem because they are often not in a good position to negotiate with their colleagues on candidates' behalf in the same way that an off-site advisor could be.
- Field experiences are not currently designed for candidates to complete a 12 week "student teaching" experience where they are in the classroom everyday, all day.

2.03 Programs assure that candidates complete purposeful and developmentally sequenced field experiences where they learn to integrate content, pedagogical knowledge, and a full range of professional and general knowledge, in the context of the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the

*Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, the Grade Expectations, and the endorsement requirements.* **Approaching Standard**

- Candidates intern in their mentor teachers' classrooms a minimum of four days a week for the entire school year, August through June. Additionally, they attend teachers' opening and closing days, workshop and parent conference days, special school events, and the like. The typical internship comprises at least 1050 hours spent in the classroom.
- The Institutional Portfolio notes that mentor teachers share methodologies, collaborate with candidates on curriculum and organization of the classroom, and gradually shift responsibility to candidates.
- In the second semester, candidates develop and implement units of study and are expected to solo teach for at least two weeks, with the mentor teacher absent from the room for the entire time.
- The Institutional Portfolio notes that three-way meetings occur with the candidate, mentor, and faculty advisor at the beginning of the year, mid-semester, and at the end of each semester.
- Candidates are required to have 60 hours at a level different from their initial classroom placement during the second semester. The Team notes that this experience might be more developmentally appropriate in the first semester allowing the second semester's focus to remain in internship classroom, where they are seen as a teacher.
- Candidates are not taking on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher, as regulation requires during student teaching, when they exit the classroom for one day a week.

**2.04** Programs provide candidates with a variety of field experiences in classrooms that serve a diverse population of students. (See definition of diversity p. 19) **Approaching Standard**

- Candidates are required to have 60 hours at a level different from their own during the second semester.
- It is difficult for para-educators who are employed by the school they are placed in to have a true student teaching experience in the classroom where they work as the role of a student teacher is quite different from the role of a para. Para-educators in the program would need a "fresh" experience for the twelve weeks that are considered their student teaching. This is especially true for para-educators who are assigned to a particular student versus a specific classroom.
- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that candidates are expected to spend time each week observing in a variety of other classrooms in the school.
- Candidates in southeastern Vermont work with populations of students that are diverse socio-economically, in sexual orientation, and religion. Racial, ethnic, linguistic and national differences are less prevalent.
- The Institutional Portfolio further indicates that candidates complete group field trips to school sites in cities such as Washington DC, New York City and Springfield MA, allowing them greater exposure to racial and cultural diversity in schools.
- Candidates complete internships in schools that have an inclusion model. They are expected to be familiar with the IEPs of students in their classrooms, and to plan their instruction accordingly.

2.05 Programs provide candidates with a sequence of field experiences that represent the range of grade levels, content, and requirements of the endorsements sought.

**Meets Standard**

- Candidates visit another classroom weekly during the fall semester and other schools in the spring semester. Reports and reflections on these experiences are included in the Performance Portfolio.
- The Institutional Portfolio notes that arrangements are made for candidates to spend significant time participating in other classrooms within the school and for visits to other schools. This includes:
  - a minimum of 60 hours at a level different from the primary placement;
  - a plan for visiting at least six other schools, including one or more with student populations that are not well represented at the placement school.
- Candidates document their experiences through the Field Experience Schedule and Tracking Sheet. This includes tracking different grade levels, student demographics, content, and other endorsement area requirement.
- Cohorts, which include candidates placed from preschool through high school, meet together for one day each week. Candidates complete projects together in small groups that cross disciplines and ages.

2.06 Programs systematically recruit, select, and support field-based faculty who model effective practice and are committed to supervising and assessing candidates' performance with respect to the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

**Meets Standard**

- Field advisors conduct small group sessions with their interns, and meet regularly in triads with interns and their mentor teachers. Field advisors receive \$300 per intern per semester. Mentor teachers receive a stipend of \$300 per semester.
- Mentor teachers are brought together at least twice each year for a collegial seminar with program faculty. These seminars allow mentor teachers to meet and share knowledge and ideas about working with interns. Through these seminars, program faculty help mentor teachers connect with the social justice pedagogy and multicultural content of the program, as they review and discuss some of the cultural material included in the content of the program. Faculty members maintain a presence in the schools, visiting at least monthly to confer with and support the field advisors and check in with mentors and interns.
- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that new mentor teachers are recruited initially through self-selection and/or recommendation of a school administrator, a current mentor teacher, or another community member with knowledge of the program and of the teacher. The placement coordinator meets with prospective new mentors to acquaint them with program expectations and procedures. Teachers who express a commitment to the program goals and delivery model, and who are recommended by their administrators, are included on the list of prospective mentors whom interns may visit during the placement process.

- Advisors in the field work closely with mentor teachers, forming a supportive team with the candidate.

**Commendations:**

1. There is a deep commitment and ownership felt by all stakeholders in regard to the program's mission of social justice and equity education.
2. Internships provide candidates with real-world experiences as teachers
3. The program is meeting a need felt by the region and across Vermont.

**Concerns:**

1. Field experiences have not been developed so that all candidates are assured of taking on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher during 12 consecutive weeks, five days a week.
2. Field advisors who are selected from the school sites may not be in a good position to support both the candidates and their colleagues throughout the internship year. Additionally, this practice might constrain the internship to a one-school perspective.
3. Para-educators, who are employed by the school they are placed in, do not have the true student teaching experience of their peers where they take on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher.

**Considerations for Further Program Development:**

- Candidates may need to participate in their seminars during student teaching after school, in the evening, on a Saturday, or through some combination of these. This will enable candidates to more fully develop their curriculum.
- Consider appointing off-site field advisors to better support candidates during the internship.
- Para-educators may need to take a leave of absence from their positions while student teaching.

### **STANDARD III: System of Assessment**

The educator programs use a system of rigorous and varied measures to evaluate candidates' growth from admission through recommendation for licensure. The assessment system ensures that candidates recommended for licensure meet the standards of performance for beginning educators as reflected in *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

**Overall Rating: Approaching Standard**

### **INDICATORS:**

3.01 Programs establish and maintain performance criteria for entrance to the program, entrance to student teaching, and exit from the program. **Approaching Standard**

- The process for review and evaluating candidates' transcripts has not yet been formalized.
- It is unclear if candidates are being assessed for the B average required for student teaching. It does not currently appear to be required for admission to the program.

#### **Entrance:**

- Applicants must hold a baccalaureate degree that provided appropriate preparation for the intended endorsement area
- The program seeks applicants who demonstrate the following:
  - A commitment to the field of education
  - A commitment to work for social justice, equity and world understanding.
  - Experience with children or youth sufficient to inform a decision to enter the teaching profession. A minimum of 100 hours in a school, camp or childcare program is highly recommended.
  - Academic ability and achievement:
    - In literacy and mathematics.
    - In other subject area(s) as appropriate to the endorsement sought.
  - Praxis I: Pre-Professional Skills Test.

#### **Exit:**

- Requirements for successful completion of the program include the following:
  - Formal presentation of an Exhibition at the end of each semester.
  - Successful completion of the Content Knowledge Portfolio, the Level I Licensure Portfolio, and the Endorsement Area Performance Portfolio
  - Completion of an action research project (for master's degree candidates).
  - Passing scores on the Praxis II Test as required by the State
  - Evaluation by the intern's advisors of progress and competence, as evidenced through various activities, including
    - advisor's observations of interns' teaching practice,
    - mentor teachers' observations and feedback,
    - faculty evaluation of interns' participation in seminars and Exhibitions.

3.02 Programs provide a system of continual assessment of candidates' knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performance as reflected in the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements, and provide interim checks to ensure candidates receive timely and accurate feedback and appropriate advising. **Approaching Standard**

- Candidates are assigned both a field advisor and a faculty advisor. Candidates work with the field advisor and mentor teacher to develop an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) setting out goals based on the Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling, the 16 Principles for Vermont Educators and the endorsement requirements.
- The program has developed a clear flowchart depicting the assessment of candidates throughout the program.
- The program has developed an observation form to use with candidates throughout the internship year.
- Candidates may not be appropriately advised on their content pedagogy by faculty advisors who do not have expertise in the content area. Additionally the Content Knowledge Portfolio, the Level I Licensure Portfolio, and the Performance Portfolio may not be appropriately evaluated for this same reason.
- It is unclear how candidates' performance in the modules is assessed.
- It is unclear that candidates' Level I Licensure Portfolios will be assessed using the state required rubrics.
- The decision to remove a candidate from their internship is taken only after consultation with the candidate, school, and advisors.

3.03 Programs provide a comprehensive system for the development and evaluation of the Level I Licensure Portfolio. **Meets Standard**

- Candidates are introduced to the portfolio requirements at the start of the year, with clear guidelines and a timeline.
- The Exhibitions presentation in December allows candidates to highlight their portfolios as works in progress. They also share them as final products at the end of the year.
- Faculty advisors work closely with candidates throughout the year to guide them in preparing their portfolios and evaluate the sections of the Level I Licensure Portfolio as they're completed.
- A co-director also scores the Level I Licensure Portfolio and meets with the faculty advisor to address any discrepancies.

3.04 Programs assure that candidates are knowledgeable about the program's assessment system including its policies, instruments and uses, and that the system is administered in a manner that is fair and non-discriminatory. **Approaching Standard**

- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that candidates who wish to question an assessment decision are encouraged to consult with the faculty advisor, then a co-director, who will review the matter with all parties in order to resolve the issue.

- The Program Handbook describes assessment procedures and assessments. These descriptions are not comprehensive, however, as they do not include:
  - Admission criteria
  - The Module Schedule
  - Level 1 Licensure Portfolio Rubrics and information
  - Pertinent laws and professional conduct expectations for candidates.
  - Program timeline
  - The assessment flowchart
  - Guidelines for placements

3.05	Institutions and programs use a formal system to collect information from educators they have recommended for licensure during the first five years of their practice for the purpose of assessing the quality of the preparation program.	<b>Meets Standard</b>
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- A survey each year solicits data from program alumnae in order to assess the program's effectiveness.
- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that this data is analyzed, incorporated into an annual report and used to inform decisions about programmatic changes. The Team presumes that this was the practice for the WEL program and that the Spark program will continue it.

3.06	Institutions and programs use a formal system to collect information from the graduates' employers during their first five years in the profession for the purpose of assessing the quality of the preparation program.	<b>Meets Standard</b>
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- A survey each year solicits data from program alumnae in order to assess the program's effectiveness.
- The Institutional Portfolio indicates that this data is analyzed, incorporated into an annual report and used to inform decisions about programmatic changes. . The Team presumes that this was the practice for the WEL program and that the Spark program will continue it.

**Commendations:**

1. Program faculty, mentors and advisors are all involved in assessing candidates' learning throughout the internship year.
2. There is a clear flowchart documenting the program's assessments of candidates in the program.

**Concerns:**

1. The program handbook does not yet contain the necessary information to guide candidates' progress through the program.
2. Candidates may not be appropriately advised by program faculty with limited content and pedagogical knowledge in an endorsement area.
3. The process for evaluating transcripts has not yet been formalized or systematized.
4. It is unclear if candidates are being assessed for the B average required for student teaching. It does not currently appear to be required for admission to the program.



**Considerations for Further Program Development:**

- Consider using a 1-4 scale on the survey to force responders to make a clearer choice on questions.
- Consider adding a portfolio entry dedicated to social justice to provide candidates further opportunity to document their learning and teaching.
- Requiring Praxis II for admission would assist the program in quickly determining candidates' knowledge of the content of their endorsement area.

***STANDARD IV: Demonstration of Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions***

Candidates are knowledgeable in the content area(s) of their endorsements and have the pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for beginning educators as reflected in *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements. **Overall Rating: Not Applicable**

**INDICATORS:**

4.01 Programs assure that all candidates demonstrate through the Level I Licensure Portfolio that they have met the standards of performance for beginning educators as reflected in the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

4.02 Programs use the data gathered through the assessment system(s) to assure that candidates recommended for licensure are knowledgeable in the content areas of their endorsements and have the pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for beginning educators as reflected in the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

### ***STANDARD V: Commitment to Diversity***<sup>4</sup>

The institution provides candidates with opportunities to learn from faculty and students from diverse backgrounds in order for candidates to develop a greater appreciation for diversity on our world. The program assures that candidates have the knowledge, skills, and disposition to address issues of diversity in the context of teaching and learning.

**Overall Rating: Meets Standard**

#### **INDICATORS:**

**5.01** The institution and programs are committed to providing an environment where issues of diversity are explored and addressed. **Meets Standard**

- The program clearly feels a deep commitment to addressing issues of diversity and equity. As the Institutional Portfolio reports, candidates explore, reflect critically on, and use materials and experiences to deepen their knowledge about global conditions, to provide alternative perspectives on the historical context for those conditions, and to enable them to reexamine and analyze the contradictions and issues that give rise to human suffering and socio-economic inequality. The political and financial foundation of U.S. schooling is critically explored.
- The program integrates social justice and equity content into the school curriculum. In their work with students, candidates are expected to link content area knowledge with multicultural and social justice material.
- The local community is also exploring these issues.
- Every faculty member interviewed in the program shares this vision of social justice.

**5.02** The institution and programs recruit, admit, support, and retain students from diverse backgrounds. **Meets Standard**

- The program's mission is a clear draw to diverse candidates. Additionally the Team concurs with the Institutional Portfolio that the social justice curriculum "is itself deeply supportive of candidates from diverse backgrounds."
- Alumna of the WEL program, the Spark program predecessor, testify to the program's success meeting this indicator.
- The program's plan for recruitment includes a variety of media and through networking with undergraduate schools having a diverse student body.
- The small size of the program allows candidates to receive a great deal of individual attention and support through activities like study groups. The Institutional Portfolio also indicates that partnerships with diverse post secondary institutions such as the School for International Training provide additional support.

**5.03** The institution and programs recruit, hire, support, and retain faculty from diverse backgrounds. **Meets Standard**

<sup>4</sup> Diversity includes individuals representing a range of different socio-economic, ethnic, racial, gender, linguistic, and religious backgrounds and histories; different sexual orientations; individuals who come from different regions of the country and the world with multi-cultural and global perspectives; and individuals with exceptionalities in learning.

- The program was founded by a diverse group of people committed to principals of equity and justice.
- The current faculty pool is representative of people of color, foreign nationals, and people from different socio-economic backgrounds.
- Spark's hiring protocols include efforts to recruit diverse applicants.
- The program's relationship with the School for International Training supports their efforts to recruit diverse faculty members.

5.04	Programs assure that candidates acquire knowledge of other cultures and communities, explore issues of diversity, and develop skills to apply this knowledge in their teaching and learning.	<b>Meets Standard</b>
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- The program fully integrates social justice and equity into almost every curriculum area. Technology appears to be an exception.
- Candidates explore issues of race, class and power in their seminars. The readings and explicit expectations for candidates' classroom practice further support this.
- Candidates visit other schools serving diverse populations, and field trips are arranged to city schools in other states.

5.05	Programs assure that candidates understand conditions which may lead to discrimination and how to take proactive steps to address discrimination.	<b>Meets Standard</b>
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- Candidates begin the program by exploring the roots of discrimination. Their initial required readings, for instance, include Beverly Tatum's book, *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"* Later candidates view and discuss Lee Mun Wah's exploration of race and white supremacy, *Color of Fear*.
- Candidates work to address prejudice and discrimination by studying these issues in the program's partner schools which are inclusive of varying socio-economic populations, of children with exceptionalities in learning, of students of Abenaki ancestry, and of differences in sexual orientation.

5.06	Programs assure that candidates create educational climates that encourage respect for self and others, positive social action, and personal health and safety.	<b>Meets Standard</b>
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- Seminars and readings teach methods for building and managing a democratic community of learners, including cooperative skills and cooperative learning.
- Candidates are expected to practice democratic, student-centered approaches to teaching and learning in their classrooms. The Observation and Feedback Form and the Summative Evaluation Form each include a section devoted to this area.

### **Commendations:**

1. The program assures a learning culture and climate where candidates create educational climates that encourage respect for self and others, positive social action, and personal health and safety.
2. The program clearly feels a deep commitment to addressing issues of diversity and equity.

**Concerns:**

1. Candidates do not appear to explicitly address issues of diversity surrounding technology.

**Consideration for Further Program Development:**

**STANDARD VI: Resources**

The institution provides its educator preparation programs with the funding, personnel, resources, and authority necessary to prepare quality educators as described in Vermont's ROPA Standards.

**Overall Rating: Approaching Standard**

**INDICATORS:**

6.01 The program is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) or equivalent.

**Non- Applicable**

6.02 The governance structure within the institution assures a clear route for programs to plan, deliver, maintain, and improve quality educator programs.

**Meets Standard**

- There is a clear structure for delivering the program.
- There is an organizational chart that details the governance structure.
- The Educational Praxis Board established a separate Board of Directors for Spark with two members who also serve on the Educational Praxis Board.
- An Advisory Council meets once a year to provide oversight and advice to the Spark board members and the co-directors.
- Spark's co-directors are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program.

6.03 The institution provides resources adequate to provide quality experiences that prepare candidates to meet the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

**Meets Standard**

- The program appears to have sufficient funds to meet requirements.
- As the program is "housed" at the School for International Training (SIT), the program has established a relationship with the college and will have some access to its resources. An interview with the dean confirms this.
- It is unclear how much access the program or its candidates will have to SIT's technology and support staff.
- The program currently has no means for qualified candidates to apply for Federal Financial Aid. This will severely limit who can participate.
- The program has secured an interest-free start-up loan, if needed, to cover cash flow requirements prior to enrollment of the first cohort of students. Conservative enrollment estimates indicate this loan will be repaid within the first two years of operation.

6.04 The institution provides support and resources that assure collaboration among faculty [from education, the liberal arts and sciences,] and preK-12 schools to maintain high-quality educator programs at all levels.

**Meets Standard**

- The program believes that collaboration between program faculty and educators in cooperating preK-12 schools is a high priority. Interviews support this.
- Faculty positions are designed with the expectation that they will maintain a significant presence in the field.
- Field site advisors receive \$300 per intern per semester. Mentor teachers receive a stipend of \$300 per semester. Module instructors are provided a salary or an honorarium.
- The program will establish bi-annual meetings with mentor teachers.
- There is limited evidence of resources to support collaboration at the high school level.

6.05 The institution's resources and policies related to faculty workload reflect the value of active engagement in teaching, scholarship, service, and preK-12 collaboration.

**Approaching Standard**

- The student to faculty ratio allows for one full time instructor and one full-time teaching assistant per 15 candidates. The program chooses to divide these positions between at least two faculty members and one teaching assistant.
- The Institutional Portfolio states that Spark faculty members are expected to engage in professional scholarly activities though there is no formal policy to support this.
- It is unclear how part-time faculty are compensated.
- The role of Faculty Advisors is unclear in terms of teaching, scholarship, service, and collaboration.

6.06 The institution provides resources to assure that technologies in instruction and for administration are current and accessible.

**Approaching Standard**

- Technological equipment to fully support instruction, and to teach candidates about classroom use of technologies, is available at SIT, the host institution. This includes candidates' library access, including on-line database access.
- The Institutional Portfolio notes that administrative technology is owned by program faculty and staff and/or will be purchased in the current year. The budget provides for purchase and updating of office equipment over time.
- The program is in the process of designing a website to provide an overview of the program and its mission, contact information, admission information and downloadable application materials. The Institutional Portfolio further notes that the website will need to expand from serving marketing purposes to become a resource for candidates, staff, partner schools and alumnae.
- The expectations for faculty and candidates' use of technology in instruction are unclear.
- While there is no dedicated person to support technology's use, the program has identified an SIT staff member who is interested in working with candidates and faculty.

6.07 The institution provides the education programs with the resources needed to meet the ROPA standards and to implement the Five-Year Plan.

**Approaching Standard**

- The program anticipates operating a self-sustaining budget primarily through tuition. A pledged private loan will cover initial program costs, as needed.
- Additional resources may need to be identified to support the program in strengthening candidates' work in special education, curriculum instruction and assessment, and curriculum development by design. The program will also need to address the ROPA concerns around content area expertise at the high school level.

**Commendations:**

1. The program has established contingency plans to support it in its first year.
2. There is a clear structure of authority for delivering the program.

**Concerns:**

1. There is limited evidence of resources to support collaboration at the high school level.
2. Additional resources may need to be identified to address ROPA concerns and to implement a revised Five-Year Plan.
3. A program that relies solely on tuition may not be viable in the long run.
4. The program currently has no means for qualified candidates to apply for Federal Financial Aid. This will severely limit who can participate.

**Consideration for Further Program Development:**

- Consider utilizing Web 2.0 tools and electronic portfolios to support candidates and faculty developing stronger skills in technology.
- Consider using a dedicated staff member to support the program's growth in using technology.
- Explore new venues for resources as the program grows.



### **STANDARD VII: Institutional and Program Renewal**

To evaluate its quality effectiveness in preparing knowledgeable and skilled beginning educators, the institutions and programs engage in ongoing self-assessment in relation to each of the ROPA standards. Programs use the data collected from the institutional and program assessment system to design and implement a Five-Year Plan for improvement that is consistent with the program's theme and has support across the institution.

**Overall Rating: Meets Standard**

#### **INDICATORS:**

7.01 The institution and programs have a comprehensive system for engaging in ongoing self-assessment in relation to each of the ROPA standards.

**Meets Standard**

- Faculty in the program meet frequently for self-reflection and to discuss improvements.
- The Institutional Portfolio notes that the program reviews a variety of data from several sources to make decisions regarding program improvement.
- The Institutional Portfolio also identifies how aggregate data are used to identify program strengths and needs relative to the ROPA standards and program goals.
- The portfolio also describes a system for how program improvements are implemented.

7.02 Institutions and programs demonstrate progress on the Five-Year Plan and concerns from the previous ROPA evaluation(s).

**Non-Applicable**

7.03 Programs report and reflect on the findings from ROPA standards I-VI and other relevant data. They use data collected to design a Five-Year Plan for improvement that is consistent with the program's theme and has support across the institution.

**Approaching Standard**

- The program completed a self-assessment in preparation for the new program visit in the Institutional Portfolio.
- Directors, in discussions with the Team, note special education and human development as growth areas for the program. The Five-Year Plan will need to be revised accordingly.
- Interviews reveal that the program has made substantial changes to the WEL program that Spark is based on.
- The Institutional Portfolio notes that the program regularly collects and analyzes data from mentor teachers, field advisors and school administrators, current candidates, and program faculty to help as part of its assessment process in relation to ROPA.

#### **Commendations:**

1. There is evidence that the program has thoughtfully revised the Spark program based on their experiences with the WEL program.
2. The directors are clearly committed to ongoing self-assessment and change.

**Concerns:**

1. Revisions will need to be made to the Five-Year Plan to respond to concerns identified by the directors and the Team.



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May 6, 2009

To: Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators

From: Judith Reed and Janaki N. Tschannerl, Directors  
Spark Teacher Education Institute

Re: Response to Final Report of the Program Review Team

As the Directors of Spark Teacher Education Institute, we want to recognize with deep appreciation the Review Team, consisting of Heather McCollum, Patti Cook, Mike Caraco and Julie Longchamp, and assisted by Mary Beth McNulty from the Vermont Department of Education. Their discussions with us in the course of the visit, as well as their ensuing report, were thoughtful and helpful in myriad ways, both in guiding us toward improvements in the program design and in confirming the unique strengths of our program model.

Spark's experiential delivery model, featuring a full-year immersion internship with a minimum of 1050 hours in the field, is central to the success of the program. Our focus on social justice and multicultural education, integrated into every component, sets us apart not just regionally but nationally.

We are pleased with the Team's recommendations that we be granted 2-year Conditional Approval for our Elementary program, and 1-year Conditional Approval for the Middle Grades and Secondary programs in Science, Mathematics, English Language Arts and Social Studies.

Attached is our report addressing the three stipulations upon which the approval rests, as well as certain other concerns (pages 4-8). Our Five-Year Plan has been revised in response to these stipulations and concerns, and we direct the Board's attention to that document. In addition, we have made revisions to our program time line and to our staffing plan (page 2), and we wish to offer a clarification of our work with para-educators (page 3).

In conclusion, we believe that the documents we are submitting will confirm the strength of our commitment and capacity to meet or exceed the expectations of the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators. We have found the Results-Oriented Program Approval process to be invaluable in strengthening our ability to document the effectiveness of our model. We are grateful to the Review Team and the Department staff, particularly Mary Beth McNulty, for their guidance and advice.

We look forward to meeting the Board on May 18 for a conversation regarding the ways in which Spark Teacher Education Institute may make a significant contribution to the field of teacher preparation in Vermont.

### Revised Program Time Line

May 1: Program Orientation

August 17-22: Five-day Summer Institute

#### Fall Semester

August 24-December 11:

Placement in internship classroom Monday-Thursday  
Seminars on Fridays and occasional Saturdays

December 14-18: Five-day Winter Institute

#### Spring Semester

January 4-April 2: Full-Time Intern Teaching (12 weeks)

Placement in internship classroom Monday-Friday  
Seminars on occasional Saturdays

April-June: Completion of internship

Placement in internship classroom Monday-Thursday  
Seminars on Fridays April 5-May 7

### Revised Staffing Plan

We have revised our faculty roles as follows:

- ☐ **Core faculty** has primary responsibility for the cohesion and comprehensiveness of the program and for communication and coordination among all faculty members. A core faculty member is present to facilitate most if not all seminars (not including endorsement-specific seminars).
- ☐ **Endorsement area specialists** provide expertise in content-specific pedagogy. A specialist is identified to conduct seminars for those candidates seeking a particular endorsement and to serve as their field advisor. Endorsement area specialists deliver the program component that embraces subject-specific practices, including pedagogy, curriculum design, assessment, interdisciplinary approaches, instructional technology, and methods for integrating social justice and multicultural education in the content area. In the field, they provide for each intern two formal observations in the fall semester, and during the 12 weeks of full-time intern teaching in spring semester they make 6 visits including at least two formal observations.
- ☐ **Curriculum area specialists** are part-time faculty who provide seminar modules in a particular area of expertise, such as literacy or special education.

### **Clarification of Policies for Candidacy of Para-Educators**

Para-educators are accepted into the program only after careful consultation and negotiation with the school administrator. The para-educator who becomes a candidate in the program must be highly recommended by his or her administrator as a person who holds promise and clear potential to become an excellent teacher in his or her own right. The candidate must be released to attend seminars, field trips and other special events occurring during school hours. The candidate must be assigned to a mainstream classroom, rather than to an individual student or small group of students, and must have flexibility to gain experience in different classrooms with different grade levels as required of all Spark interns. The mentor teacher in the classroom must be willing to assume the role of para-educator for significant periods of time, such that the candidate may take on the full teaching responsibilities of a classroom teacher without depriving the classroom of the necessary support of a para-educator. Appropriate arrangements to provide similar support must also be made during the two consecutive weeks of solo teaching.

## RESPONSES TO STIPULATIONS AND CONCERNS

**Stipulation 1 (Middle and Secondary Areas): The program will assure that candidates develop in-depth content and pedagogical knowledge in the endorsement area(s) sought, including the central concepts, the tools of inquiry, and the structures of the relevant discipline(s).**

Review Team Concern	Spark Response
Stnd 1: The scope and sequence (e.g. syllabi, expectations, assessments, etc) of the seminars and modules are not clearly articulated.	By September 2009, Spark faculty will produce syllabi for the program modules, clearly articulating expectations, readings, assessments, criteria, etc.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stnd 1: Candidates are not assured of developing sufficient content knowledge and pedagogy under the guidance of the current faculty.</li> <li>● Stnd 3: Candidates may not be appropriately advised by program faculty with limited content and pedagogical knowledge in an endorsement area.</li> </ul>	A pool of faculty members will be identified who are qualified to address content knowledge and content-specific pedagogy in each endorsement area represented in the 2009-10 student cohort. These endorsement area specialists will provide content area seminars and two formal observations in the fall semester, and during the 12-weeks of full-time intern teaching will make 6 visits including at least two formal observations.
Stnd 3: The process for evaluating transcripts has not yet been formalized or systematized.	Transcript evaluation forms have been designed for each endorsement area and are in current use.
Stnd 3: It is unclear if candidates are being assessed for the B average required for student teaching. It does not currently appear to be required for admission to the program	Admission to the program requires a B average at the candidate's most recent institution of higher learning. We note that our students may be many years past their undergraduate degrees, with life experience and maturational factors that are far better predictors of their academic success in the program and as teachers than is their undergraduate grade point average. For such students we may make carefully considered exceptions, based on clear evidence that such an exception is warranted, and with extra requirements expected of candidates for whom a grade in an endorsement area course was not up to our standards.

**Stipulation 2 (All Areas): Field experiences will assure that all candidates (including interns working as para-educators) gradually take on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher during the 12 consecutive weeks, five days a week.**

Review Team Concern	Spark Response
Std 2: Field experiences have not been developed so that all candidates are assured of taking on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher during 12 consecutive weeks, five days a week.	During a 12-week period in the spring semester, all candidates will be engaged in their internship classrooms and schools full time, five days a week, during which time they will take on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher. Their two consecutive weeks of solo teaching will be scheduled during that period. Please see Revised Program Time Line (page 2).
Std 2: Field advisors who are selected from the school sites may not be in a good position to support both the candidates and their colleagues throughout the internship year. Additionally, this practice might constrain the internship to a one-school perspective.	Spark faculty members who are experts in the endorsement area and external to the school site will take full responsibility for all visits, observations and advising (other than that expected of the mentor teacher) and will work together with interns and mentor teachers in the field throughout the internship year. Please see revised staffing plan (page 2).
Std 2: Para-educators, who are employed by the school they are placed in, do not have the true student teaching experience of their peers where they take on the full role and responsibilities of the classroom teacher.	Please see Clarification of Policies for Candidacy of Para-Educators (page 3).

**Stipulation 3 (All Areas): The program will assure that all candidates gain knowledge of child development, special education, and technology and its application in teaching and learning.**

Review Team Concern	Spark Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stnd 1: Technology has not been fully integrated into the program and candidates are not assured of developing the technological skills necessary for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning.</li> <li>● Stnd 5: Candidates do not appear to explicitly address issues of diversity surrounding technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A dedicated staff member will be identified by September 2009 to support faculty and candidates in making effective use of technology.</li> <li>● Technological skills are among the learning outcomes documented in the descriptions of program modules provided to the Team, and will be included in the detailed syllabi to be produced by September 2009.</li> <li>● Insofar as diversity and equity issues are embedded in all Spark components, access to technology is addressed as one of those issues and will be included in the appropriate syllabi.</li> </ul>
<p>Stnd 1: There is no clear system for the development, documentation, and communication of modules related to child development, special education, technology, use of standards in lesson/unit planning, student assessment, reading and writing in the content area.</p>	<p>A component entitled Theories of Human Development and Exceptionality is included in the program and documented in the materials provided to the Team. A detailed syllabus will be produced for this module by September 2009, clearly articulating expectations, assessments and assessment criteria, etc. A faculty member has been identified who is qualified to teach this material, including both child and adolescent development.</p>
	<p>A detailed syllabus will be produced for the Curriculum and Assessment module by September 2009, clearly articulating expectations, readings, assessments and assessment criteria, etc. This module does include standards-based planning and assessment, and lesson planning handouts will reflect this.</p>
	<p>The team expressed a lack of clarity as to “how candidates were using assessments of student work to inform their practice”. We note that our summative evaluation form includes under Planning and Preparation the expectation that the candidate “uses assessment results to modify instruction.” In addition, the Level I Licensure Portfolio evaluation rubric provided to the team contains this item under Part V, Teaching Over Time, Principle #7. In the Curriculum and Assessment component we emphasize the primary importance of assessment as informing future planning. The syllabus for that component will clearly specify this principle among learning outcomes.</p>



	<p>Reading and writing in the content area are among the learning outcomes listed in each of the endorsement-specific modules, as well as in the Curriculum and Assessment module. Detailed syllabi will be produced for these modules by September 2009, clearly articulating expectations, readings, assessments and assessment criteria, and including literacy in the content area. A faculty member has been identified who is qualified to teach this material, and endorsement area specialists will also be expected to include literacy, as indicated in the learning outcomes.</p>
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### Resources

Review Team Concern	Spark Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stnd 6: There is limited evidence of resources to support collaboration at the high school level.</li> <li>● Stnd 6: Additional resources may need to be identified to address ROPA concerns and to implement a revised Five-Year Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>The budget will be revised by June 30 2009 to include any additional resources needed in order to address ROPA concerns and implement our revised Five-Year Plan, and to identify and secure the sources of any additional financial support.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Stnd 6: A program that relies solely on tuition may not be viable in the long run.</li> <li>● Stnd 6: The program currently has no means for qualified candidates to apply for Federal Financial Aid. This will severely limit who can participate.</li> </ul>	<p>Our Five-Year Plan includes steps to qualify with FAFSA so that students can apply for federal loan and grant programs. We are also close to agreements with at least two institutions of higher education, creating partnerships that may provide immediate access to FAFSA programs.</p>

### Other Concerns

Review Team Concern	Spark Response
Stnd 3: The program handbook does not yet contain the necessary information to guide candidates' progress through the program.	The Program Handbook will be revised in early summer 2009 to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Admission criteria</li><li>● The Module Schedule</li><li>● State required Level 1 Licensure Portfolio Rubrics and information</li><li>● Pertinent laws and professional conduct expectations for candidates.</li><li>● Program timeline</li><li>● The assessment flowchart</li><li>● Guidelines for placements</li></ul>
Stnd 7: Revisions will need to be made to the Five-Year Plan to respond to concerns identified by the directors and the Team.	The Five-Year Plan has been revised and is appended.

**SPARK TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE  
FIVE YEAR PLAN  
May 2009**

**Throughout:**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Evidence for Assessment</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Establish and maintain a diverse student body	Enrollment and completion data	Directors, Admissions
Maintain our diverse faculty	Staffing data	Directors
Maintain a FTE faculty-student ratio of at least 1:15	Enrollment and completion data, staffing data	Directors

**by September 2009**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Evidence for Assessment</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Revise the program budget to include any additional resources needed in order to address ROPA concerns and implement our revised Five-Year Plan, and to identify and secure the sources of any additional financial support	Budget	Directors
Revise the Program Handbook in early summer 2009 to include elements noted by Review Team	Program Handbook	Directors
Produce syllabi for the program modules, clearly articulating expectations, readings, assessments, assessment criteria, etc.	Program module syllabi	Faculty
Identify a pool of faculty members who are qualified to address content knowledge and content-specific pedagogy in each endorsement area represented in the 2009-10 student cohort	Faculty vitae, faculty contracts	Directors
Identify a dedicated staff member to support faculty and candidates in making effective use of technology	Faculty vita, faculty contract	Directors

**by May 2010:**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Evidence for Assessment</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Enroll new cohort of at least 15 students	Enrollment data	Directors, Admissions
Establish one or more partnerships with academic institutions granting master=s degrees	Contractual agreement(s)	Directors
Procure grant money and gifts for operations	Income accounting	Directors, Development
Submit successful application for approval by Vermont Department of Education to grant post-secondary credits	DOE Approval	Directors
Make significant progress toward eligibility for affiliation with FAFSA.	Submission of documentation for approvals and accreditations required by FAFSA	Directors
Present at one or more professional conferences during 2009-10	Annual report	Directors, faculty, mentors, students
Conduct at least 1 in-service offering during 2009-10 on social justice education for partner schools	Annual report	Directors
Implement systems of data collection for purposes of self-study and candidate assessment	Admissions data Student evaluations Student work samples	Directors, faculty, staff
Survey first graduates and begin alumnae record keeping	Survey results Alumnae data base	Directors
Procure grant money and gifts for operations	Accounting data	Directors, Development
Submit satisfactory one-year report to Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators	As indicated in ROPA requirements	Directors
Set new goals as indicated by self-study processes	Annual report Assessments appropriate to goals	Directors, faculty, staff

**by May 2011:**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Evidence for Assessment</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Enroll new cohort of at least 25 students	Enrollment data	Directors, Admissions
Establish a well equipped and staffed office	Physical office, staffing data	Directors
Increase faculty salaries above inflation	Salary schedule	Directors
Budget funds for faculty scholarship and professional development in social justice education	Annual budget	Directors
Establish scholarships at 10% of tuition income	Budget, accounting data	Directors
Increase candidates' field experience and outreach in diverse multicultural settings	Field experience data	Directors
Improve students' use of technology in their teaching practice and in other professional tasks	Syllabi, annual report	Faculty
Conduct at least 1 in-service offering during 2010-11 on social justice education for partner schools	Annual report	Directors
Present at one or more professional conferences during 2010-11	Conference bulletin(s), annual report	Directors, faculty, mentors, students
Procure grant money and gifts for operations	Accounting data	Directors, Development
First annual survey of graduates and employers	Survey results	Directors
Improve systems of data collection for purposes of self-study and candidate assessment	Admissions data Student evaluations Student work samples	Directors, faculty, staff
Complete 2-year ROPA report	As indicated in ROPA requirements	Directors, faculty, staff
Set new goals as indicated by self-study processes	Annual report Assessments appropriate to goals	Directors, faculty, staff

**by May 2013:**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Evidence for Assessment</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>
Enroll new cohort of at least 35 students	Enrollment data	Directors, Admissions
Increase scholarships to 20% of tuition income	Budget, accounting data	Directors
Conduct at least 2 in-service offerings annually during 2011-13 on social justice education for partner schools	Annual report	Directors
Procure grant money and gifts for scholarship fund and operations	Accounting data	Directors, Development
Present at one or more professional conferences annually during 2011-13	Conference bulletin(s), annual report	Directors, faculty, mentors, students
Set new goals as indicated by self-study processes	Annual report Assessments appropriate to goals	Directors, faculty, staff